Fellowships awarded to SC students

*298. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the break-up of the fellowships awarded to the Scheduled Caste students pursuing higher studies like M.Phil. and Ph.D. during the current financial year, State-wise; and

(b) the names of the new schemes, if any, for educational and economic development of the people of Scheduled Caste communities, particularly scavengers?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) A new scheme namely Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste students to pursue higher studies of M.Phil/Ph.D. has been introduced by this Ministry with effect from 2005-06. The implementation of the scheme has been entrusted to the UGC. The scheme envisages State-wise/UT-wise distribution of 1333 scholarships in a year in proportion to the State-wise/UT-wise percentage of the total SC population.

2. The Junior/Senior Research Fellowships of the UGC and CSIR are on the basis of a written test called National Eligibility Test (NET) conducted jointly by UGC/CSIR twice a year at national level. 15% of the fellowships are reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates in case of UGC, while in case of CSIR, besides relaxation in the minimum qualifying marks for appearing in the JRF examination, SC candidates are given a further relaxation in the marks obtained at the time of the award of the fellowship. The fellowships are not awarded State-wise.

3. The University Grants Commission has also introduced following two new schemes;

(i) Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.

(ii) Post Graduate Scholarship for professional courses for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.

4. Following two schemes are being formulated by this Ministry and are at an advanced stage of consideration.

(i) Scheme of Top Class Education for Scheduled Caste students.

(ii) Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers